

Report from Speaker Series Dr. Rufus Houston July 31, 2002

The Secretary's Women Employees Advisory Council held its third speaking event of the fiscal year on July 31st in the Jefferson Auditorium of the USDA South building. Dr. Alma C. Hobbs, Co-Chair of the Women's Council introduced Dr. Houston. He received a B.S. from Central State University and a Doctor of Naturopathy from Trinity College of Natural Health. He is also a Natural Health Professional, a member of the National Iridology Research Association, the American Holistic Health Association, the Holistic Health Practitioners and the Herb Research Association. Dr. Houston practices at the "Wholistic" Health Care Center in Silver Spring Maryland. Doctor Hobbs quoted Thomas Edison in saying "the doctor of the future will give no medicine".

Dr. Houston has six concepts of wellness:

- 1) Absence of sickness does not necessarily equal health.
- 2) The importance of prevention of disease.
- 3) Encouraging the use of healing.
- 4) Using natural means of healing.
- 5) Personal responsibility for one's health.
- 6) Education for health.

Dr. Houston said that people often come to him to lose weight and to stop taking the medicine that they are taking. People complain to him that they are sick of being "sick". He works with people on how to prevent disease and obtaining a better quality of life and urges them to focus on the interconnectedness of mind, body and spirit, and works with people to become more centered, regaining their emotional health and get rid of their guilt.

Dr. Houston emphasized that good health starts with diet. He said that people need to eat more vegetables (6-12 servings a day), seeds, nuts, grains and fruit. He places fruit last because fruit consists of sugar that raises blood sugar. He also urges people to eat less meat and to use it as a condiment to vegetables (for example, by adding salmon to a salad).

He also discussed the DASH diet guaranteed to reduce blood pressure in 14 days and give up the junk food and refined and processed food in our diets. Dr. Houston said "we kill ourselves with our knife and fork" meaning that we as Americans eat so unhealthily and this causes a wide range of health problems. He encouraged the audience to eat as many fresh foods as possible. Dr. Houston also spoke of trying to avoid having our blood sugar crash when it rises and falls too quickly. He urged people to look at their family history and examine potential problem health histories such as having a parent with diabetes.

Dr. Houston indicated that people should try to eat 3-40 grams of fiber a day through whole wheat, oats, or other fibers. He said that eating whole grains helps the blood sugar

to rise gradually and also helps to reduce cholesterol because fiber acts as a magnet for cholesterol.

Dr. Houston indicated that fish and fish oil are good and that if you're trying to transition to vegetarianism try to transition by eating chicken and turkey without the skin. Dr. Houston recommended that people eat as many organic foods as possible. For cooking utensils Dr. Houston said that everyone should have a steamer as a healthy way to cook vegetables, and a juicer. In the morning he said that a good breakfast is a vegetable juice cocktail. A Netherlands study evidently showed that coffee is a contributor to diabetes, and it also acts as a stimulant.

People who are not concerned about cholesterol can eat 2-3 eggs a week, and organic eggs are particularly good.

He promotes whole foods and organic foods. Dr. Houston addressed the potentially prohibitive high cost of buying organic foods by noting that many grocery stores such as Giant and Safeway is starting to carry more organic products and that shoppers should ask stores to carry more organic foods. He also said that it is possible to buy organic food off of the Internet, and that there are a number of Amish markets that produce vegetables without chemicals.

Dr. Houston noted that Americans need to plan meals better, and that when we don't we often result in eating fast food, which is loaded with sodium, preservatives, and fat.

Dr. Houston said that we have one of the most "constipated societies" and that we need to drink more water to get waste out of our systems. He said that drinking lots of water also helps to keep skin clear, and helps the body to get rid of other debris from cells and tissues. He recommended that people consider "blood cleansers", red clover and burdock.

Dr. Houston spoke of the problem that many people who come to him have parasites and that major carriers of parasites are dogs and cats and that people shouldn't allow their dogs and cats to sit on their dining tables or kitchen counters where food is prepared. Dr. Houston noted that sometimes bacteria in the pancreas could exacerbate diabetes.

The Importance of Exercise.

Dr. Houston said that we should try to exercise five days a week with one day more intense exercise, by increasing intensity of exercise you increase the strength of your heart and fitness level. If you haven't exercised in a while get a check up from a physician first. Dr. Houston noted that we don't respect our bodies enough and that we need to learn this from a young age but that kids are getting sicker at earlier ages and that we should have a life-long pursuit to good health. He opined that we could wipe out heart attacks and stroke by changing our diet. He said don't smoke and pay attention to your family health history.

Hormone Replacement Therapy

Dr. Houston noted the recent study regarding the dangers of hormone replacement therapy and he advised natural hormone replacement therapy that would include soy, red clover, and alfalfa.

Sugar addiction

Dr. Houston indicated that there is an herb called gymnema that causes sugar to taste like sand and that taking this can help people stop eating so much refined sugar.

Herbs

For Stress Kava kava, chamomile tea, or rescue remedy

Tea Tree Oil—good for burns

Aloe Vera—good for burns or sunburn

Men Go Through Menopause too

Dr. Houston noted several men in the audience and said that men also go through menopause but for them it tends to happen in their 40s and makes their testosterone levels drop, their testicles shrink, and also sometimes causes depression.

Question and Answers

What to do about insomnia?

- Dr. Houston urged the audience to look at their stress level and stress often leads to insomnia.
- He noted the importance of exercise in avoiding insomnia.
- Kava kava and B complex vitamins as well as calcium can also help with insomnia.
- Another good calmer before bedtime is to take a warm bath with a cup of Epsom salts and add several drops of lavender oil and soak 10-15 minutes.

What to do about high blood pressure?

- Kelp and Irish Moss can help

Drinking a lot of water can lead to Potassium loss

Dr. Houston recommended possibly taking dandelion or parsley.

For Strong Bones During Menopause

Dr. Houston recommended weight bearing exercises and taking some magnesium that can help in the absorption of calcium.

Anxiety in Children

Try kava kava, rescue remedy, or licorice root.